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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 STATE 095492

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TAGS: [KCFE](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [NATO](#)  
SUBJECT: HLTF: GUIDANCE FOR SEPTEMBER 17 MEETING

REF: (A)STATE 92527, (B)STATE 92528, (C)USNATO 309,  
(D)STATE 93327

Classified by Rich Davis, VCI/CCA Office Director, for  
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) The September 17 High Level Task Force (HLTF) meeting will provide an opportunity to give Allies a frank report of the September 3 U.S.-Russia bilateral discussion of the CFE parallel actions package and to raise the issue of how we should deal with the second anniversary (in December) of Russia's cessation of its implementation of CFE. While Russia remains willing to discuss CFE, so far it has shown no indication that it is ready to engage seriously on solving the CFE impasse; it is important that we make this clear to Allies, while also reinforcing our commitment both to CFE and to working with Allies as we chart the way forward.

U.S. goals for the September 17 HLTF and related meetings are to:

-- give a frank report to Allies on the September 3 U.S.-Russian bilateral discussion;

-- begin a conversation with Allies regarding the upcoming two-year anniversary of Russia's ceasing to implement CFE. We have all said consistently that NATO implementing while Russia does not cannot go on indefinitely. Now is an important moment to raise this question, particularly in light of the need to begin to consider how to position ourselves for the NATO and OSCE Ministerials in December -- just ahead of the two-year anniversary; and

-- in the context of the frank U.S. report, indicate that senior levels in Washington are assessing next steps and welcome Allied views.

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Contacts and Bilaterals  
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¶2. (C) U.S. Rep should draw from Reftels A and B for details of Assistant Secretary Gottemoeller's September 3 meeting in Geneva with Russian Security and Disarmament Director Antonov on CFE. U.S. Rep may share the following:

- A/S Gottemoeller stressed the Obama Administration's readiness to think creatively to find a way forward on CFE and welcomed Russia's stated readiness, in its May 2009 aide-memoire on CFE, to work on the basis of U.S.-drafted parallel actions package.

- Recognizing that Russia wanted certainty about Allies' willingness to ratify Adapted CFE, A/S Gottemoeller underscored that Russia's current suspension of its

implementation of CFE was a major bar to movement on ratification of the Adapted CFE Treaty (A/CFE) by the United States and others. She observed that Russia's aide-memoire and the questions Russian officials had posed in capitals in July regarding possibilities for trial implementation or provisional application of Adapted CFE had suggested a possible way forward. In this context, the two exchanged ideas on the possibility of trial implementation of all -- or elements of -- A/CFE; provisional application of A/CFE; and how those questions might relate to the ratification of A/CFE as elements of the parallel actions package.

- Gottemoeller said she thought that in the context of an agreed parallel actions package, it would be possible to move on ratification of A/CFE if Russia were implementing at least some aspects of CFE. Antonov made clear that Russia would never agree to resume implementation of the existing CFE treaty.

- Gottemoeller suggested informally that in the context of agreement between Russia and NATO on the issues in the parallel actions package, one option might be for NATO States Parties to commit to complete ratification in a specific timeframe, just as had been done in the 1996 Flank Document, while Russia agrees to resume implementation of CFE for the same time frame. She

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noted that while all elements of CFE limitations, verification, and information exchange are important, it might be possible to consider trial implementation of some of the operational aspects of the Adapted Treaty for a specified period. Depending on what had been achieved by the end of that period, entry into force or provisional application might follow, or states could consider whether other steps were necessary. She said that if this idea sounded promising, we would consider it formally in Washington and with Allies.

- Antonov did not reject the concept, but focused his remarks on Russia's hope for provisional application of the Adapted Treaty, perhaps after a majority of states had ratified the Adapted Treaty. In addition, the Russian team asked about which elements of the Adapted Treaty might be part of a trial implementation effort.

- However, Antonov was very explicit in underscoring that ratification of A/CFE was "not enough." He stressed that any CFE package must include elimination of the Treaty's legally-binding limits on where Russia can locate forces on its own territory. He made a detailed and unambiguous presentation of Russia's position on the flank issue, building on the points in Russia's May 5 aide-memoire. Antonov said unambiguously that a CFE "package deal" that created the conditions for ratification of Adapted CFE by all Treaty parties would have to eliminate the flank limits for Russia, in order to be considered positively in Moscow.

- Gottemoeller emphasized that the flank limits were critically important for NATO Allies. She made clear that NATO's approach envisioned a process for updating the CFE regime. Specifically, we envisioned discussion of changes to the flank and other Adapted CFE elements only after entry into force of the Adapted Treaty. She said it was essential to handle this issue sensitively if we wanted to reach agreement on a package that would preserve the benefits of CFE. Gottemoeller suggested careful consideration as to whether there were issues we could use as "ice breakers" to enable agreement on a package that preserves the Treaty and permits its further development.

- On substantial combat forces, Antonov pushed hard for immediate discussion of a specific definition,

suggesting that this might take place in Vienna at the Joint Consultative Group (JCG), or elsewhere. The U.S. noted again that this was an issue involving NATO and Russia; it was not a CFE (or JCG) issue, but had been included in the parallel actions package because Russia had said this was important.

- For Moldova, Antonov suggested that the March 18 statement by Medvedev, Voronin, and Smirnov on the Transnistria conflict obviated the need to address withdrawal of Russian forces from Moldova in the CFE context. Gottemoeller observed that there was a lot of common ground between Russia and the U.S. on the Moldova section of the parallel actions package, but that the devil was in the details.

- A brief exchange on Georgia focused on stabilizing measures relevant to the region. The U.S. suggested that these should be calibrated to address the obvious sources of security concern: military equipment and personnel, military facilities (e.g., Georgia's concerns about Russian facilities in Abkhazia and South Ossetia), and generalized military transparency. Members of the Russian team suggested all these areas could be discussed, but Antonov was not prepared to let the discussion continue.

- A/S Gottemoeller believes that Russia has not yet decided to engage seriously with us on how to resolve the CFE impasse.

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CFE The Way Ahead  
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¶3. (C) U.S. Rep should note to Allies our disappointment that, despite Russia's aide-memoire on CFE and its approaches in NATO capitals, we have not been able to get Russia to engage seriously on solving the CFE impasse. It is not clear to us how -- short of offering major concessions -- we can persuade Russia to engage in a focused negotiation. Given the impending

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two-year anniversary of Russia's non-implementation, senior U.S. officials believe it is time to begin considering appropriate next steps, and we would welcome substantive ideas from Allies on the way forward. The idea mentioned informally by A/S Gottemoeller on September 3 to combine some sort of trial implementation with a possible timeline for ratification of A/CFE, which might be a catalyst for action on other elements of the package, is one example. (Note. The idea of a trial implementation phase with a set end date was mentioned by the UK rep as a possible alternative to provisional application during the May 2009 HLTF Away Day. End Note.) U.S. Rep should explore whether Allies have any creative thoughts. At this point, we do not believe it would be helpful to plan for additional seminars similar to that held in Berlin last June.

¶4. (C) U.S. Rep should recall the discussion at the July HLTF meeting regarding an "expanded group" discussion. While it does not appear to Washington that Russian authorities are ready to negotiate seriously, if Allies believe we should seek to arrange such a meeting, we will do so.

¶5. (C) Regarding the next possible Gottemoeller-Antonov meeting, U.S. Rep may note that Antonov has suggested that he and A/S Gottemoeller meet again on CFE during the week of September 21, when they are both in Geneva. Considering the lack of Russian engagement during the recent meeting, the U.S. has not decided whether to accept Russia's proposal.

¶6. (C) December Data Exchange. U.S. Rep should remind Allies of the upcoming two-year anniversary of Russia's "suspension" of CFE implementation and the need to consider how NATO will take note of or react to the occasion. Allies have noted repeatedly, including in Summit and Ministerial statements, that the situation in which we continue to implement the Treaty in the face of Russia's non-implementation "cannot continue indefinitely." One obvious question for consideration is whether NATO Allies should continue to provide their annual CFE information exchange. The U.S. has not reached a conclusion on this point, but we are consulting with our legal advisors on the range of available options. U.S. Rep should ask whether Allies have started to think about this, and what are their initial views. We would propose having a focused discussion on this topic at the next HLTF, one that we would like to have scheduled in October, in order to thoroughly examine options before December.

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Other Business  
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¶7. (SBU) Reftel D contains guidance on issues under discussion in the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation in Vienna. U.S. Rep should draw from this guidance as appropriate in the event any of these issues are raised during the HLTF or in meetings on the margins.  
CLINTON